A Brief

APOLOGY

IN

Behalf of the PEOPLE

In Deriſion Call'd

QUAKERS.

WRITTEN

For the Information of our Sober and Well-inclined Neighbours in and about the Town of *Warminſter* in the County of *Wilts.*

BY

Will. Chandler, Alex. Pyot, J. Hodges,
And ſome others.

By honour and diſhonour, by evil report and good report, as deceivers and yet true, as unknown and yet well known, as dying and behold we live, 2 Cor. 6. 8, 9.

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A Brief Apology, &c.

IT is not that we love Contention, or desire Controversie, or are impatient in bearing Reproaches, that we appear thus publick, but such have been the repeated high Charges, and smart Lashes that our Adversaries (more especially some of the *Presbyterian* Assembly) have of late taken a liberty, liberally and lavishly to bestow upon us, that we find ourselves concern'd to Clear and Vindicate the Truth and Innocency of our Christian Profession, from those black aspersions, that have rendred it so frightful and formidable, as though 'twere only a meer complication of pestilent Errors, as well as to satisfie the minds of such of our piously-inclined Neighbours, as may be desirous to hear us speak for ourselves, as also for the information of those who may have been imposed upon, by that dress wherein our Opposers have represented us. And al-

though these can Object nothing material against us now that hath not been long since over and over offer'd by some of the same Perswasion, and have as often received Answers from some or other of our Friends, (some of which have never yet been by them replyed unto) yet forasmuch as those may not have come to the view of many of our Neighbours, for whom this is chiefly intended, we thought fit briefly to say so much as we think may be accommodate to the present occasion; and which perhaps with unprejudic'd minds may bespeak
Esth.3.5. our Creed not so unsound and erroneous as our somewhat different deportment hath rendred us obnoxious and contemptible, as well as distasteful to
Joh.5.44 those who either ambitiously affect honour and respect, and love greetings,
Mat. 23. or think a complaisant complyance to the fashions, customs, and complements of the Age, to be one of the chiefest felicities of this Life, and best expression of their Civility and good Manners.

We therefore desire our well-disposed Neighbours, candidly to weigh what we have to alledge against the Clamours of those, who to be sure will not set us out to our best advantage, and to receive

receive an Account from ourſelves what we are, and what we believe and hold for Chriſtian Truths, who certainly muſt needs know better our own Belief than thoſe who perhaps never examin'd it, to any other end than to find fault, if ever they did it; and alſo that you will not think it ſtrange, that we expreſs not our Belief in ſome particulars, in the affected Terms of other Profeſſors of Chriſtianity, but think it more reaſonable and ſafe to content ourſelves with that Dreſs of Language, in which the Holy Ghoſt thought fit to hand them to us in the Holy Scriptures; thoſe moſt Excellent and Divine Writings, which above all others in the world, challenge our reverence and moſt diligent reading, thoſe Oracles of God, & rich Chriſtian Treaſury of Divine ſaving Truths, which were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of them may have hope, and are profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and inſtruction in righteouſneſs, to the perfecting and thoroughly furniſhing of the Man of GOD to every good Work, making him wiſe unto ſalvation thro' Faith which is in Chriſt Jeſus; containing all Chriſtian Doctrines neceſſary

Ro. 15. 4.

2 Tim. c. 3. v. 15, 16, 17.

to be believed for ſalvation, and are a ſufficient external ſtandard and touch-ſtone to try the Doctrines of men; and
Gal. 1. 8. we ſay with the Apoſtle, whoſoever ſhall publiſh, and propagate any other Go-ſpel and Faith than is therein teſtified of to us, by thoſe inſpired Pen-men who were the firſt Promulgators thereof, though he were an Angel let him be accurſed; all which, and whatſoever is therein contained, we as firmly believe as any of you do; and as 'tis the duty of every ſincere Chriſtian, we are heartily thankful to God for them, who through his good Providence hath preſerved them to our Time, to our great benefit and comfort.

We Believe in that Great Omnipotent God, that made and created all things, and gave us our Being, whom in ſincerity of heart we fear, reverence and worſhip, being ſeriouſly concern'd for our ſouls welfare to eternity. We believe that Great Myſtery, that there
1 Joh. 5. 7. are Three that bear Record in Heaven, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, and that theſe Three are One in Being and Subſtance: And as do ye, ſo do we alſo hope for and expect Salvation, only and alone through the Son of God our bleſſed Lord and Saviour JESUS CHRIST

CHRIST of *Nazareth*; believing that God the Father hath ordained him for salvation to the ends of the Earth; and that no other Name is given under Heaven, by which men ſhall be ſaved; who being conceived by the Holy Ghoſt, in the Womb of the Virgin *Mary*, was born of her at *Bethlehem*; as alſo his Holy and Exemplary Life, perfectly free from ſin; his Doctrine, Miracles, Sufferings, and Death upon the Croſs, without the Gates of *Jeruſalem*; his Reſurrection from the Dead, and Aſcenſion into Heaven, where he is at the Right Hand of God the Father, perfect GOD and perfect Man, and the alone Mediator between GOD and Man, and is our Advocate with the Father, and ever liveth to make Interceſſion for us; and alſo ſhall judge both Quick and Dead: All which, and whatſoever elſe is recorded of him in the Sacred Scriptures, we firmly believe.

Iſa. 49. 6. Act. 13. 47 & 4. 12. 1 Pet. 2. 21, 22. Heb. 4. 15. Ro. 8. 34. 1 Tim. 2. 5, 6. 1 Jo. 2. 1. 2. Act. 10 42

This Jeſus, in whom dwelt the fulneſs of the God-head, we believe offer'd up himſelf according to the Will of the Father, an acceptable ſacrifice to God, and became a Propitiation for the ſins of Mankind, *to the end of the World*, and dyed for all Men, as all dyed in *Adam*; through whoſe Blood God proclaims

Col. 2. 9. Eph. 5 2. 1 Joh. 2. 2. Heb. 10. 12 Rom. 5. v. 12. 18.

2 Cor. 5. 19. claimes Redemption and Salvation to Man, and offers to be reconciled, and freely for his Sons ſake to remit, forgive
Ro. 3.25. and paſs by all paſt offences to as many
Luk. 24. 47. as ſhall truly and heartily repent of their ſins, and turn from the ſame, and ſhall
Acts 10. 43. & 26. 20. ſo believe in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and love him as for the future to live a
Eph. 4. 22 23, 24. holy Circumſpect Chriſtian life, and o-
Ro. 8. 3. 4. bey his commands, thereby continuing in his love.

2 Cor. 5. 15. 17. Tit. 2. 14. Joh. 14. 15, 21, 23, 24. & 15. 10 2 Tim. 2. 19. 1 Pet. 4. 1, 2, 3. Jam. 2. 12. to the end. Which holy life ſo much Celebrated and ſtrictly kept to in the Primitive Ages of Chriſtianity, that whoſoever named the name, or took the name of Chriſt upon them were to depart from iniquity, we believe ought to be inſeparable from a true and faithful Chriſtian as ever accompanying a true living and active Faith; and it ſeems was thought no leſs neceſſary by thoſe who compoſed the promiſe that ſhould be made in behalf of infants before they were admitted into that once ſacred Catalogue, (to wit) that as they
Tit. 2. 11, 12. came to years of diſcretion, they ſhould forſake the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked
Luk. 1. 75 world, and all the ſinful luſts of the fleſh, and keep Gods holy will and Commandments, and walk in the ſame all

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the days of their lives: This we believe to be the bounden duty of mankind, and though our Oppoſers have ſcoft us, and branded us with error for holding perfection, becauſe in pleading for a holy righteous life as that which is well-pleaſing to God, and avouching his power to be ſtronger in man, as man cleaves to it, and believes to reſcue him from under the power of Satan, than is that of the devil to retrain him in Thraldom, we have ſometimes made uſe of the words of Chriſt and his Apoſtles, as be you perfect as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect, he that hath this hope in him, purifieth himſelf even as he is pure, *&c.* Yet have we never pretended to a moral perfection beyond what is contained in the above promiſe, which is ſound and true in it ſelf, and is that which God requires of us; and therefore 'tis that we frequently preſs it's neceſſity, and fervently exhort people to its performance. And notwithſtanding we have hence been falſely accuſed that we expect to be ſaved by our own works as being Meritorious, yet we don't acknowledge a holy life as the Efficient and procuring Cauſe of our Salvation; which we no leſs than you totally refer

Ro. 6. 18, 19. 22. 2 Cor. 7. 1. Eph. 4. 24 Theſ. 3. 13 & 4. 7. Heb. 12. 10. 14. 1 Joh. 4. 4.

Mat. 5. 48 Col. 4. 12. 1 Joh. 3. 3.

Eph.2.8. fer to the free Grace, and mercy of God in Christ without any merit in Man, but we esteem it as a constant companion thereto, and a necessary condition on our part in complyance with God's gracious offer, without which we may not obtain it, being inseparably annext to that Faith which only pleaseth God, and is but our reasonable duty.

James 2. 18. to the end.

Heb.11.6. Ro.12.1.2.

Heb.2.9. & 10.12. And we believe that although Christ thus offer'd up himself once for all, for the sins of all men to the end of the world, thereby rendring repentance and amendment of life prevalent with God; yet that the Traditional Belief of that alone is not sufficient to entitle us to that common Salvation that comes by him, but that 'tis of necessity that we truly repent and be converted from the evil to the good, and therefore 'tis no less necessary for us now than 'twas for believers in the Apostles days, that we be turned from darkness to light, or in otherterms, from the dark power of Satan, to the power of God who is light, that thereby we may every one know the work of Redemption and Salvation, wrought in and for our selves: For 'tis not enough to believe that Christ dyed, if we feel not the blessed effects of his death, who came to save

Act. 3.19

& 26.18. 20.

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us from our ſins, and bleſs us by turning us from our iniquities, and gave himſelf for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himſelf a peculiar people zealous of good works. Mat. 1. 21. Act. 3. 26. Tit. 2. 14.

For we believe ſuch to be the natural State of Man in the fall, that by nature we are dead as to God, at a diſtance from him prone to evil, and to gratify the deſires of our ſenſual minds, ſway'd by the corrupt and ſinful luſts of the fleſh, and under the power of a ſtrange King, rul'd by the Prince of the Power of the air, ſo that our inward man being thus dead from God, we cannot exerciſe our ſpiritual ſenſes towards him, nor can this natural man perceive, know, or favour the things of God, which only are ſpiritually diſcerned; wherefore, notwithſtanding our Saviour dyed for us, we are yet by nature in a miſerable undone condition, in Captivity to our ſouls Enemy, except we know the ſecond *Adam* the Lord from Heaven, that quickning ſpirit, to quicken our ſouls, and make us alive to God again, that being reſtored to the uſe of our inward ſenſes, we may by the aſſiſtance of his Divine Light (wherewith for that Gen. 2. 17 Ro. 5. 12. 2 Cor. 5. 14. Gen. 6. 5. Ro. 7. 5. Eph. 2. 2. 2 Tim. 2. 26. 1 Cor. 2. 14. 1 Cor. 15. 45. 47. Eph. 2. 1. 5 Col. 2. 13. Ro. 8. 11. Eph. 5. 13. 14. Joh. 1. 9.

Eph. 2. 3. & 5. 6. that end he hath bleſt all the Sons and Daughters of Men) ſee our ſelves in this ſad and loſt ſtate under the wrath of God, and abhor our ſelves therefore, and under this living ſenſe (wherein things will appear with another aſpect than before) cry to God for deliverance therefrom, with ſuch and inward hearty ſorrow as works a true repentance for the ſame. 'Tis not our being ſprinkled, when infants, that will make us true Chriſtians, convert us from being children of wrath to become children of grace, and Sons of God, and members of Chriſts Church, and inveſt us in an intereſt in him; 'tis not learning our Catechiſm and ſubſcribing to certain Articles of Faith, though never ſo Orthodox, and being educated in a hiſtorical belief of what Chriſt did for us above ſixteen hundred years ago; 'tis not this only that will adminiſter a ſufficient, true, and ſaving knowledge of Chriſt, and really intereſt us in his death and ſufferings, all which people may talk of and pleaſe themſelves withal, and yet continue as faſt bound under the dominion of Satan (who ſtill rules where diſobedience is) as thoſe leſs perfect in that leſſon, but the true and ſaving knowledge

2 Cor. 7. 10.

Joh. 1. 12. 13.

Ro. 8. 14.

ledge of Christ is to know our selves turn'd from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to the power of God, that by it we may be delivered from the power of darkness, and be translated into the Kingdom of his dear Son, to know his saving power really to rescue and redeem us from under the power of him that hath enthrald us, and leads Captive at his will those who lives in the vanity of their minds, to know him bind this strong man, to spoil his goods and dispossess, and cast him out, to know Christ to sit in the soul as a refiner, to burn up, consume and destroy, to purify and throughly to purge out whatsoever is contrary to him, to wash us and make us clean that we may have right to a part in him, that being cleansed and sanctified, he may take up his abode with us exercising his Kingly power, and working in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure. The mind being thus disentangled, and having cast off its former yoke, the old things being done away, all things now become new; a new tender heart of flesh according to the promise, new thoughts, desires, inclinations, affections, words, actions, this new inside producing a new outside

Act. 26.18
Col. 1.13.
Joh. 8. 32. 36.
Mar. 3.27
Mal. 3.2.3
Luk. 3.16, 17.
Ro. 15.16.
Joh. 13.8.
1 Thes. 5. 23.
1 Cor. 1.2
Joh. 14.23
Heb. 13.21
2 Cor. 5. 17.
Ezek. 36. 26.

Mat. 23. 26. side also, even throughout a new Creature, now in Christ indeed, and really entitled to those benefits that accrue to men through him; that living faith Jam. 2. 18, to the end. that pleaseth God and gives victory, and is ever fruitful to him in good works, being begotten, and this work Heb. 12. 2 of Redempton and Regeneration thus wrought in the soul by Jesus Christ, together with that most precious sacrifice he offer'd up, when his Precious Blood Shed upon the Cross for us, we believe compleats the salvation of every soul that is thus awakened, and Ro. 6. 11. 13. made alive, and set free, by the power and spirit of him that is the way, Joh. 8. 36 the truth, and the life of every soul that truly lives to God, to walk in that holy way of life, truth, and peace, Isa. 35. 8, 9. that was prepared of old for the ransomed and redeemed to walk in.

And we believe that he graciously waits with exceeding great kindness, and long suffering, that men may repent, Rev. 3. 20 knocking at the door of every mans heart, freely offering, but not imposing his assistance to this most Mat. 23. 37. concerning work and change in the minds of men; so that in the day wherein God will judge the world by Jesus Christ, and every secret thing will

will be made manifeſt, God will be juſtified and clear of the Blood of all Men, and every mouth will be ſtopped, and every Man's Condemnation will be of himſelf for having rejected the day of his viſitation, wherein God calls to Man, and offers to be reconciled to him for reſiſting the ſtrivings, and ſlighting the reproofs of his ſpirit, which in matchleſs mercy he hath given man to inſtruct him, and ſhew, and lead him in the way of life and peace. Neh. 9. 20.

We believe, that though the pravity of mans nature in the fall, is ſuch, that the Natural or Carnal Man, that is enmity againſt God in the ſtate of meer nature, minds only the things of the fleſh, and naturally brings forth the works thereof, and cannot pleaſe God, nor keep and obſerve his Laws, but is prone to evil; yet that thoſe who embrace the viſitation of God, and are really regenerated and born again of incorruptible ſeed, by the word of God that lives and abides forever, that ingrafted word that is quick and powerful, and able to ſave and ſanctify the ſoul, are born into a new life, and inveſted with another and higher power, and becomes ſpiritually minded, and by the ſpirit are ſet at liberty to walk after Ro. 8. 5. 7. 8. 1 Pet. 1. 23. Heb. 4. 12. Jam. 1. 21 Joh. 17. 17. 19. Joh. 3. 6.

ter the ſpirit, and bring forth it's fruits, and receives ability from the ſpirit to
Ro. 8. 14. 15. ſerve God acceptably, being now led by the ſpirit of God and become his Children, taught of him, and through the ſpirit of adoption receiv'd into
1 Cor. 12. 3. their hearts, have right to call God Father, and Jeſus Lord, for having through
Ro. 8. 13. & 6. 6. Eph. 4. 22. 23. 24. Gal. 5. 24 Col. 3. 9. 10. the ſpirit mortified the Old Man or firſt Nature, with his corrupt and depraved inclinations and evil deeds, and put him off, having crucified the fleſh with the affections and luſts thereof, they put on the New and Heavenly Man, which after God is created in righteouſneſs and true holineſs, and being renewed in the ſpirit of their minds, they now walk in
Ro. 6. 4. & 7. 6. Newneſs of Life, and are really in Chriſt, and therefore are changed and become new Creatures, and now thinks and acts under the conduct of a principal Superiour to that which formerly governed them, having their minds raiſed to a Region above that of fallen Nature, ſo that now the ſtream of their thoughts, deſires and actions, runs in another current, and the bent of their affections are after thoſe things that are
Col. 3. 1. 2. above where Chriſt is; that eye being now open'd that ſees a more tranſcendent beauty and deſireableneſs in the inviſible

visible and durable treasures of him, than all the transcient felicities of this world can afford.

And we believe that whosoever expects the blessed imputation of Christ's righteousness, ought thus to put on the Lord Jesus, and to be thus cloathed upon, and covered with his righteousness, and in measure have his Holy Life brought forth in and through them, and and know him to enliven and influence their minds, and to work in and for them, and that without him they can do nothing, but thro' him that strengthens them, they can do whatsoever he commands them, that as they abide living branches in him, through that sap and vertue they dayly receive from him, they are made able to bring forth fruits well-pleasing to God, whereby he is glorified. For though God the Father accepts us in Christ, and for his sake; yet is the New-Birth the indispensible Qualification, and true distinguishing Mark of those that are really in him. He that is in Christ is a new Creature, *Old things are past away, behold all things are become New.* *John* says, *He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also, so to walk even as he walked.* We ascribe nothing to Man, as having any power or ability in or of himself to please God,

Ro.13.14.
Isa.26 12
Phil.2.13.
Phil.4.13.
Joh.15.5.
Joh. 15. 5, 8.
2 Cor. 5. 17.
Gal.6.15.
1 Joh.2.6. & 30. 7, 8, 9.

Joh. 15. 4, 5. but attribute all power to do that which is good to Christ alone, in whom only the Father is well-pleased. 'Tis through him that men so love and fear God as to

Acts 10. 34, 35. eschew evil, and work that Righteousness which is acceptable to him; upon whom therefore mans dependance ought to be dayly, to receive from him such suitable supplies, as through a constant watchfulness may enable them so to walk, as to continue in his favour and enjoy his smiles: For 'tis not as too many seem either to imagine, or would gladly have it to be, that they may live in sin and disobedience here, and indulge their corrupt inclinations; and yet hereafter have Christ's Righteousness imputed to them:

1 Pet. 4. 18. For though we are not under the *Mosaical* Law, so as to be obliged to its Ordinances, diverss Washings, and *Levitical* Priest-hood, Christ our High-Priest having offer'd up himself once for all, and abolish't it;

Mat. 5. 20. yet are we not so under Grace, as to be discharged from living well, though we are not tyed to its Rites and Ceremonies, yet are we obliged to fulfil its Righteousness, which Christ came not

Ro. 3. 31. & 8. 3, 4. to destroy but to establish: For though God be gracious and merciful to forgive us our Trespasses through the mediation of Christ, upon our true and hearty

hearty repentance, and turning from them; yet 'tis not that we ſhould take a libertyto go on in ſin & rebellion againſt him. We are not to ſin becauſe he is gracious, that his Grace may abound; if ſo, Where is the ſtraitneſs of this way? If this be to take up a dayly Croſs to our own Wills that we may perform his, Pray where is the liberty of the fleſh? Thoſe that are vertually in Chriſt, which renders us acceptable to the Father, and compleatly eſpouſed to him, muſt needs have reſigned their Wills, as an effect of true love, and requiſite to ſo ſtrict a union, oppoſite Wills being inconſiſtent therewith, whence Obedience neceſſarily follows. The Apoſtle *John*, after having ſignified that God is Light, and that thoſe that would know the blood of cleanſing, and true fellowſhip with him, and one another, ought to walk in the Light as he is in the Light, tells the young and weak in the Faith, whom he calls Children, that he writ thoſe things that they ſhould not ſin; but yet if any through weakneſs or inadvertency ſhould ſin, and ſo fall under the Fathers diſpleaſure, he tells them that Chriſt the Righteous is both a Propitiation and alſo an Advocate that interceeds with the Father; and that their keeping his Commands was the ſureſt

Iſa. 55. 7.

Ro. 6. 1. 2.

1 Joh. 1. 5. 7.

Chap. 2. and firſt 6 Verſes.

evidence of their knowing and being in him; but of the ſtrong, whom therefore he calls young men, he ſays, *That the word of God abode in them, and that they had overcome the evil one.*

Theſe things may ſoon be ſpoken and comprehended in the Underſtanding, but to experience them fulfill'd in ourſelves, is our higheſt intereſt, and only can make us ſharers in them. The eſſence of Chriſtianity and happineſs of Chriſtians, don't conſiſt in having our heads ſtuft with knowledge, only to lodge there and feed upon it, but to have our hearts filled with divine love, which animates us to diligence, and inſpires us with courage and vigor to obſerve and perform the Will of God, who looks not at what people profeſs only, or by what name they are call'd, but regards the heart, and what principle governs there: People may make a profeſſion of the beſt things; and yet continue alive to themſelves, they may alter Opinion or Perſwaſion, and yet not turn from darkneſs to light, from the power of ſatan to God. There hath not been wanting a very large and ſplendid Profeſſion of Chriſtianity, adorned with curious, elaborate, and elevated Notions, poliſh'd with Rhetorick and Oratory; but that power and life that reaches the heart, and gives victory

Joh. 14. 21. 23.

ctory and dominion over its lusts and affections, which war against the soul, is that which too many are yet strangers to; when yet to know our lapsed souls restored from their first fallen state in *Adam*, and raised to a station where we may both perceive the things of God, and receive power to work his Will, to know our minds redeemed, and that power vanquisht which led us captive, and we leaven'd by the Heavenly Gift, into its own nature; as 'tis the very life and marrow of that Religion, about whose exteriour parts the world is filled with Noise; so 'tis the proper and most concerning-business of our lives, to find this great salvation accomplish'd in us; the experimental working out whereof in the heart, by the saving Grace and Spirit of God, that is given to man to profit with, will yield more satisfaction and true contentment to that soul that sincerely seeks the Kingdom of Heaven, and the Righteousness thereof, in whom 'tis begun and carrying on, than to hear or read all their days of what God hath done through all Ages, for those that truly love and fear him; for want of which 'tis that the profession of Christianity is generally so empty & barren in producing a real pious life, attended with the fruits of the spirit, and a due Obedience proceeding from the birth of the spirit,

Gal. 6. 3, 4.

without which the moſt refined methods of Worſhip & Devotion will not recommend us to God, who is inacceſſible *by the birth of the Fleſh*: Nor do we believe that 'tis acceptable to God for people to ſing before him thoſe Songs & Pſalms, that were the experiencies and ſpiritual exerciſes of holy men in times paſt, without having ſome living experience of the ſame things in themſelves; or that People can properly and truly ſpeak more or farther of the things of God, than what they have known and experienced. Where amongſt all theſe ſound Goſpel-Scriptural-Truths, is lodg'd that latent Venome ſo much fear'd and talk't of by our Adverſaries, that is ſo dangerouſly contagious, and apt to infect the minds of thoſe that ſhall incline to converſe with Us, or our Books, touching our Belief in theſe neceſſary Points of Chriſtianity? Which of them is it, that being imbibed, is more mortal and deſtructive to the ſoul, and defiles it more than drinking a draught of Poyſon, or going to a Bawdy-houſe? Where are thoſe damnable Opinions and Hereſies wherewith you have been terrified? Which of them is it, that being perſiſted in, does neceſſarily lead to damnation, and for which the * *Devil muſt needs carry us a pick-pack to Hell?* Is it in that we hold-forth the infinite Love of God to mankind,

As ſaid *Tho. Vincent.*

**T. R's* unſavory & uncharitable Expreſſion.

kind, in not only freely of his meer Grace and Favour, providing a Sacrifice, thro' which an Atonement is made for the paſt Tranſgreſſions of man, who was never at all in a capacity to make any for himſelf, which is applicable to every one who ſhall believe, repent and return; but hath alſo afforded to all the means of Faith, Repentance and Converſion, for God requires not impoſſibilities of men, but expects they ſhould improve thoſe talents diſtributed to them, in not only ſending forth the Son of his love to dye for their ſins, that they ſhould not longer live therein, but alſo in ſending forth his Light and Spirit of Truth into their hearts, to lead and guide them into all Truth, and cauſing his Grace that brings ſalvation, to appear to all men, to inſtruct and teach them to deny all Ungodlineſs and Worldly Luſts, to forſake the Devil and all his Works, the Pomps & Vanities of this wicked World, to reſcue and ſave them from living in the ſinful Luſts of the Fleſh, and help and ſtrengthen them to return to their Obedience, and live a ſober, righteous and godly Life, to keep God's Holy Will and Commandments, and walk in the ſame all the days of their Lives.

Joh. 3. 15. 16. Act. 10. 43 1 Cor. 12. 7.

Joh. 14. 16, 17, 26. & 16. 13. Tit. 2. 11, 12.

Which gift from God to man the Holy Scriptures plentifully teſtify to, under

various denominations, as Spirit, Light, Word, Grace, Seed, Leaven, Anointing, &c. By all which we understand that
Mat. 25. 14, 15. Spirit or Heavenly Talent with which God hath endowed Mankind in some degree or other that he may profit with it; in the improvement whereof by a diligent Co-working therewith, to the answering those holy ends for which we receive it, we doubt not but to be happy in rendring a good account of our Stewardship, and entring finally into the Joy of our Lord. Our opposers themselves also pretend to the spirit and grace of God, or else what means their praying for its assistance, and those plausible fine-spun discourses of it, wherewith they sometimes entertain their Auditory: We Charitably hope 'tis more real, than only to beautify and recommend them to the hearers, as what they cannot well avoid, for that the Scriptures are so full of that Language, and if indeed it be real, why is that a fault and error in us which is so sound and ornamental in them? And we think it very strange that they should apprehend any incongruity in granting this Divine Principle to be a Divine Light to the mind; since its proper Office is to teach and Instruct, to manifest and point to us our duty, as well as to dispose and enable us to perform it; and ought

to

to be our leader and governour. If the godly admonitions, and exemplary lives of good men were rightly called lights to the world, ſurely much more properly may this, whoſe fountain is light, and does more nearly illuminate and inform the underſtanding, and renders thoſe effectual, juſtly challenge that neceſſary, and acceptable appellation. If then the Grace and Spirit of God be in the hearts of men, ſurely 'tis not wholly unactive there, but will be making ſome attempts towards accompliſhing the end for which 'tis placed there; 'twill be at times attacking the enemies, and endeavouring to ſupplant its contrary, which being holy and pure in its nature is never reconcileable to ſin and evil, but ever ſtrives againſt it, and may, as men regard, it be infallibly known by the nature of its efforts. And we dare appeal even to all mankind, whether they find not ſomething placed in their minds and Conſciences, which though perhaps not regent there, yet never mingles with, nor Conſents to their evil deeds, but always remains undefiled, and teſtifies againſt them, and convicts, reproves, and condemns them for it, and alſo oft-times in the cooler temper of their ſpirits, manifeſts their ſtates to them, and as 'twere reaſons with them, diſcovering the

Tit. 2. ij, 12. Joh. 14. 17, 24. & 16. 7, 8, 13, 14. 1 Joh. 2. 27.

Joh. 3. 20, 21. Epheſ. 5. 13.

the evil of their ways ſecretly calling to them to come out of it, begetting deſires and inclinations, ſometimes to ſeek after God, and to make their peace with him. Now ſince man in his meer natural State, is Totally dead and fallen from God, that he cannot as of himſelf think a good thought; and that God only is eſſentially good, and as that which is truly, ſo muſt needs proceed from him; this principle in us that ever convicts us for vice and evil, whether in thought word or deed, and diſpoſeth us to conſider of our latter end, and oft makes men ſigh in the midſt of laughter, reminding them, that for thoſe things they muſt give an account, that draws us heaven-ward and inclines us to vertue and goodneſs, to do to all men as we would be done unto, to be juſt, ſober, merciful, temperate, *&c.* Muſt needs be ſomething that is not of us, but is pure and immaculate, and of a divine nature, ever *aſpiring* and raiſing the mind towards its Original.

Joh. 16. 8, 13.

Prov. 14. 13.

Whence it cannot be a Natural Light or meer light of Nature, as very many would have it, who yet talk of the ſpirit of God being in Man, for 'tis an undoubted truth, that no agent can act beyond its own ſphere, and raiſe its object to a ſtate more noble than it ſelf, nor pro-

produce effects of a nature more ſublime than its own Original. Beſides 'tis very clear and evident from Scripture, that the mind of man is oft lighted by a light, Superiour to that of meer reaſon, and that man by the utmoſt power and extent of human reaſon & ſpeculation, (though he may arrive to implicit knowledg that there is a God, yet) can never attain to a true, ſpiritual and ſaving knowledge of God, without the Concurrence of a Divine and ſupernatural Agent: For though the mind of man as a rational Being, be that Capacity or Candle that is to be Lighted, yet 'tis Chriſt that muſt ſo enlighten it, as to give us a true diſcerning of thoſe things, that appertain to him and his Kingdom, and by adhering and yielding obedience to its diſcoveries, we ſhall know an Acceſſion of more Light. And the Apoſtle ſpeaking of what God by his ſpirit had revealed to them, ſaith expreſly, that the ſpirit ſearcheth all things, yea the deep things of God; and that as none knows the things of a man, ſave the ſpirit of man which is in him, ſo the things of God knows no man but the ſpirit of God: That the natural man neither knoweth nor receiveth the things of the ſpirit of God, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned, and to that end they had received the ſpirit which is of God. The Light of

Job, 21. 17. Pſal. 18. 28.

Ro. 1. 19. 2 Cor. 4. 6. Prov. 20. 27. Luk. 24. 45. Joh. 1. 9. Epheſ. 5. 13, 14, 17.

Pſal. 36 9 Prov. 4. 18. 1 Cor. 2. 10. to the end.

of Nature is occupied about natural Objects, those things that are within its own Region, acting within its own proper Orb, but reaches not to that knowledg of God which is life eternal, except our natural powers or human capacity be illuminated by the rays of divine light, for the world by humane wisdom knows not God. And Christ saith very plainly and positively, that none knows the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son reveals him.

1 Cor. 1. 20.

Mat. 11. 27.

That these strugglings in us should be the suggestions of Satan, that he should disquiet and disturb people for their sins, for serving him, and put them upon endeavouring to be freed from their vassalage under his power, were absurd to imagine; no, our Saviour puts that beyond a question, when he asks, Can a Kingdom divided against it self stand? And by and by saith plainly, that whilst the strong man arm'd keep the house his goods are at peace, till a stronger than he comes to bind him, *&c.* So that 'tis clear it's not the devil, but the approaches of a superiour power, that breaks the peace of people for sin, and that follows and condemns them for Disobedience and Trangression, and is the same that would, and only can redeem their minds out of that miserable state, and bind that strong man, and break his

Mark. 3. 24. 27. Luk 11. 21

power

power and caſt him out, would they but joyn thereto, and accept of deliverance by it.

Nor does its being Extended to all men, through all Ages from their youth upwards, beſpeak it to be therefore natural or contemptible, but on the contrary, of the greater moment to all men; for beſides that the Apoſtle ſaith a manifeſtation of the ſpirit is given to every man to profit withal, the bleſſings and gifts of God are free and valuable from their intrinſick worth; God in nature ordain'd nothing in vain, but by how much any thing is of the greateſt uſe to us, for ſuſtaining and accomodating our natural life, the more common it is, as the Sun that gives Light to all thro' all Ages, &c. 'Tis we fondly rate things according to our fancies, and eſteem and prize them more for their rarity and curioſity, than uſefulneſs; but God beſtows moſt univerſally that which is of the abſoluteſt neceſſity to man. Are not all men that are born, ſtrangers and enemies to God, in the dark, and at a diſtance from him in the State of Nature and muſt therefore be enlightned, converted, and born again, and made ſpiritual before we can be reconciled to him; ſhall not God then, that would have all repent and be ſaved, cauſe the Light of the

1 Cor. 12 7.

Jo. 3. 3. 5.

1 Tim. 2. 3, 4.

2 Pet. 3. 9.

the Son of Righteouſneſs to ſhine upon all, and give a meaſure of his grace and ſpirit to all, to aſſiſt them in the accompliſhment of that in themſelves which they cannot do of themſelves, and yet is of indiſpenſible neceſſity to our Salvation? Wherefore God by his ſpirit ſtrives with man ſo long as his day of viſitation laſts. Since then our oppoſers acknowledge the ſpirit and grace of God, which alſo is Light to be in Man, unleſs they can ſhew it, by its manifeſtly different and ſuperiour nature, tendency, and operation, to be contradiſtinct from that we have been ſpeaking of; we ſee neither abſurdity nor error in concluding it to be one and the ſame grace and free-gift of God to all, which is always the ſame in nature, though it differs in degree, and is that Heavenly Treaſure, which God hath committed to our truſt; and bleſſed will they be who rightly employ and improve it, and gives place and room to this ſeed of the Kingdom in their hearts, where, though it may appear at firſt contrary to the expectation of man, little, mean and contemptable, ſcarcely regarded amongſt the ſtuff, wherewith mens minds are filled, yet joyn but to it, that it may exert its power and force, and 'twill grow & increaſe; let but this leaven have its perfect work

Mat. 13. 31, 32.

and

and 'twill leaven the whole lump into its own nature. Mat. 13. 33.

Be pleaſed to conſider, whether we have juſtly merited the invidious invectives of our adverſaries, in believing that the Lord ſearches the heart of man, and ſhews him his thoughts, that he hath and will remember this latter age of the world, and hath not forgotten to be gracious in performing thoſe bountiful promiſes made in times paſt to the off-ſpring of the Gentiles, in placing his Law in our Hearts, and putting his truth in our inward parts, in pouring out of his ſpirit upon all the Sons and Daughters of men, in becoming our teacher, and giving us the knowledge of himſelf, through the Revelation of his Son Jeſus Chriſt, who is come to open our blind eyes, and to bring us, that were bound in darkneſs, out of the priſon-houſe, who hath promiſed to be with his people to the end of the World, in believing that God hath ſent us the Comforter, the ſpirit of Truth, to be our Remembrancer, and to guide and direct us in the way of Truth; in atteſting the ſufficiency and utility of the Teachings of this Holy Unction, ſent into our hearts, in believing that though Chriſt be in his glorified Body in Heaven, yet that he is preſent alſo in the hearts of his People, who is King of Saints,

Luk. 1. 21. Jer. 17. 10. Ro. 8. 27. Rev. 2. 23 Amos. 4. 13. Jer. 31. 33, 34. Ezek. 36. 26. 27. Joel, 2. 28, 29. Act. 2. 16, 17, 18. Iſa. 54. 13 Mat. 11. 27. Iſa. 42. 7. & 61. 1. Joh. 14. 16, 17, 26. & 16. 3. 1 Joh. 2. 20. 27.

Joh. 14. 17,20,23 & 17. 23, 26. Saints, and ſhall he not then rule in them? The High and Holy One that inhabits Eternity, hath promiſed to dwell alſo with the Humble and Contrite, to revive and comfort them, ſhall not he, whoſe preſence fills Heaven and Earth, be preſent in the Heart of Man? Shall not he that rejoyceth in the habitable parts of the Earth, and delights in the Sons of Men, reſide in his People? Are they not Members of him, and he their Head? Can there be a more intimate Union and Communion than between the Head and the Body, the Vine and the Branches? The ſame Spirit of Life that is in the Head, is the Life of the Body alſo, and acts it; he that is joyned to the Lord is one Spirit, doth not the Life that is in the Root paſs to the Branches alſo, and preſerves them living? Are not all dead Branches, in whom this Life is not? Whoſoever hath the Son of God, and feeds on him, hath Life by him; and thoſe that have not Chriſt, who is the Life of his Saints, hath not Life: How could his People in all Ages partake of him, if he were not preſent in them? Surely this Doctrine doth not deſerve to be ſcoft, but is moſt comfortable to thoſe who are ſick of Love, and thirſt ardently after the Enjoyment [not Hear-ſay] of him.

Joh. 15. 4. 5.

1 Cor. 6. 15, 17, 19.

Joh. 6. 56, 57.

1 Joh. 5. 13.

Ro. 10. 6, 7. 8.

2 Cor. 13. 5.

Col. 2. 20

Con-

Conſider ſeriouſly theſe things which are agreeable to Scripture, and with what reaſon People have derided us for our Belief herein; terming it the Quakers Chriſt, as though his manifeſting himſelf in our Hearts were another, or diſtinct from Jeſus Chriſt of *Nazareth*, that is glorified with God the Father in Heaven, which we deny: For though he be aſcended into Heaven, and ſits at the right hand of God, far above all Principalities and Powers; yet is not he ſo circumſcribed, but that (as by him all things were made and created) he is the life, and filleth all in all in his Church and People. Is the Divinity and Humanity of Chriſt divided? Is not their inſeparable Union the true and intire Chriſt? Can then his God-head be preſent, and he who is the Heavenly Man be abſent? What think you of him that appear'd to *John*, and gave him his Commiſſion to the Seven Churches? whom he deſcribes, *Rev. ch.* 1. who ſaith, *Behold, I ſtand at the door and knock, if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will ſup with him, and he with me.* The ſame ſaith, *I am he which ſearches the reins and hearts, and I will give unto every one of you* Col. 1. 16. Eph. 1. 23. & 3. 9. Rev. 3. 20. & 2. 23.

according to your works: Was not this
Acts 17. 31. the true Christ the Mediator, by whom
Rom. 2. 16. God will judge the World? And can
John 1. 16. he make this near Inspection into the innermost part of the Minds of Men, so as no Thought can escape his notice, if he be not present there? What made *Paul* desire that our Lord Jesus Christ
1 John 4. 13. might be with *Timothy*'s Spirit, if he thought it impossible? Do not all acknowledge the Spirit of Christ, who is the Anointed, to be in his People, and is he then absent? Is its being a Mystery, far beyond our comprehension to conceive how it can be a sufficient Argument that therefore 'tis not so? Ought we not in such cases to exercise Faith? and acquiess in the Testimony of the Holy Ghost, expresst in the Sacred Scriptures, rather than interpose with our nice and curious Subtilties? prying unnecessarily into things that are too high for us; remembering that Secret Things belongs to God; and that those that know most here, know only
1 Cor. 13. 9, 12. in part the things that are invisible; and see them but as through a Glass. Shall Men that neither know themselves, nor have any intuitive knowledge of the Essences, even of the meanest things, where-

wherewith Nature every-where preſents us, which are obvious to our Senſes; yet aſpire to thoſe more abſtruce, and undertake to account for that which is beyond the reach of the moſt pregnant Wits to penetrate.

We hope it's no Error toavouch the Power of Chriſt to be ſtronger than that of the Devil, that he is able really to bind him, to bruiſe his Head, and break his Power, to diſpoſſeſs and caſt him out, to fulfil to the uttermoſt the end of his coming, to deſtroy the Works of the Devil, and to ſave thoſe from their ſins who ſhall have true Faith in his Name and Power: Surely it's not inconſiſtent with Chriſtianity to believe that Chriſt can, or will, throughly purge his Floor; that he can indeed deliver out of the Priſon-houſe, and reſtore Man out of the Fall to God again, and give him power to forſake the Devil and all his Works, *&c.* Gen. 3. 15. 1 Theſ. 5. 23.

We find it conſonant to Scripture, and the Goſpel-diſpenſation, to believe that thoſe who are regenerated and born again of the Spirit, have through the Spirit mortified the firſt carnal corrupt Nature, which cannot pleaſe God, Rom. 6. 6, 7, 11. 2 Pet. 1. 4.

Eph. c. 4. v. 22, 23, 24. Colos. c. 3. v. 9. 10. and if dead, and ſlain, and buried too, ſurely then it no longer lives, but the mind is at liberty, and reſtored to act in a new Life, to walk after the Spirit, and fulfil the Righteouſneſs of the Law;

Rom. 8. 2, 4. the Law of the Spirit of Life in Chriſt Jeſus, having ſet them free from the Law of Sin, and Death which is its Wages. 'Tis for want of Peoples experiencing this real Birth of the Spirit brought forth, and knowing Freedom in themſelves by it, which no Duties or Performances in the Will of Man, nor entertaining of the moſt refined Opinions in Religion can adminiſter, ſhort of the Law of the Spirit of Chriſt in their hearts; 'tis for want of this, that People are ſo very apprehenſive, of difficulty, even to impoſſibility, of living a Holy Righteous Life; which yet is ſo

Mat. 5. 8. Heb. 12. 14. neceſſary to our Salvation, that without it we cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven, nor ſee God. Nor is the way broader, or its paſſage leſs ſtrait and difficult than they imagine; nay, 'tis abſolutely impoſſible for them to walk therein, while they are immerc'd in their firſt corrupt unbridled Nature, which cannot keep the Law of God, while their Luſts and Paſſions are rampant,

pant, their Affections inordinate, and Wills unſubjected, and follows the deſires and evil inclinations of their Minds without reſtraint. But if they come to know another Principle and Power to govern their Minds, to create in them new clean Hearts, to regulate and ſubject their Wills, to ſubdue and tame their Paſſions, to limit their Deſires, and direct their Affections and Inclinations wholly after that which is good, to meliorate their Spirits throughout, and make them heavenly minded, having an averſion to all Evil, and a great love to Vertue and Goodneſs: Being thus perfectly transformed, where is the extream difficulty now, for the good Man, out of the good treaſure of his Heart, to bring forth good things? Mat. 12. 35. Will not this new well-inclin'd inſide, that now deteſts Evil, and loves and delights in Righteouſneſs, as naturally follow after, and bring forth that which is Good, as before he did Evil? Here is no force upon Peoples Natures, but they are converted, and throughly leavened in another Nature, and are in their meaſures Partakers of the Divine Nature, which only can work the Will of God. 2 Pet. 1. We requeſt our piouſly-incli-

ned Neighbours, well and ſeriouſly to weigh and conſider, the abſolute neceſſity there is for every True Chriſtian
Col. 1. 13. thus to know; their minds moulded and faſhioned anew, by the Power and Spirit of Chriſt, working mightily in them, in order to their pleaſing God by a Holy Righteous Life, having eſcaped the corruption that is in the World through Luſt; and conſidering that 'tis not ſo ſoon attained, as apprehended in the underſtanding to be neceſſary: That with all diligence they addreſs themſelves to the performing that which is the main and proper buſineſs of our Lives. Wherefore as it hath pleaſed the Divine Power to give us all things
2 Pet. 1. 3. pertaining to Life and Godlineſs, ſo let
Tit. 2. 11, 12. us with a vigilant attention to, and co-working with that Grace, which to that
Phil 2. 12, 13. end is given, work out our Salvation with a reverend fear; ſince a good degree of attainment herein is ſoon loſt, except there be a conſtant ſedulous watchfulneſs upon the Mind amidſt all buſineſs and concerns, to have a check upon our words and thoughts, and a diligent preſſing forward: For while
Mat. 26. 41. we live in this World we are liable to temptations, and may enter thereinto alſo,

alſo, without a ſtrict care and watchfulneſs; our Senſes preſenting many baits to our Minds on every hand, which Satan makes uſe of to beguile, and many provocations offer themſelves in our Pilgrimage; againſt all which God's Grace is ſufficient Armour; as our Minds are ſeaſoned by it, ſo that where any ſhortneſs is, 'tis through Inſincerity, Negligence, or Inadvertency 2 Cor. 12. 9.

Or is it a dangerous heinous Hereſie that we with very many Profeſſors of Chriſtianity, believe the Univerſality of the Love of God to all Mankind; that God who is good to all, whoſe Mercies extends to all the Works of his Hands; is ſincere in his Intention, and Atteſtation thereof, and doth not deſign to delude us, when he affirms, That as certainly as he lives he deſires not the death of a ſinner, but rather that he would return and live; that God, whoſe Love and Mercy is unlimited, doth graciouſly and generouſly offer Salvation, through Jeſus Chriſt, (upon certain Conditions to be performed on our part) to all Mankind, to every individual Man and Woman upon the face of the Earth, which is the true Goſpel-meſſage, good Tydings of great Joy, which ſhall be to all Pſ. 145. 9. Ezek. 33. 11. & 18. 23. John c. 3. v. 14 15, 16, 17. Iſai. 55. 1. Rev. 22. 17. Rom. 5. 18. Luke 2. 10, 14.

all People, Peace on Earth, and good will towards Men; good cauſe indeed to rejoyce, that all are within the verge of Mercy and free Pardon; that God is indeed no Reſpecter of Perſons, but among all Nations and People, he or ſhe that fears him, and works Righteouſneſs is of him accepted; and that Chriſt dyed for the ſins of the whole World, yea, for every Man; ſurely then all for whom he dyed are thereby put into a capacity for Salvation; that ſaving Grace hath appeared to all Men, and a manifeſtation of the Spirit is given to every Man to profit withal. And that none are reprobated, but thoſe that continue to be deaf to the Calls of this Grace, and reſiſts the Spirit, and hides and neglects their Talents till the day of their Viſitation be over; and Chriſt ſo withdraws himſelf, as to ceaſe longer to ſtrive with them; ſo that the means being taken away, they are left to themſelves, and given up to Hardneſs of Heart; that being abſent that ſhould prepare, tender, and mollifie it, that now they cannot Repent, Believe, and be Converted.

Iſa. 55. 7. Ezek. c. 18 v. 21, 22, to the end. Acts 10. 34, 35. 1 Joh. 2. 2. Heb. 2. 9. Tit. 2. 11. 1 Cor. 12. 7. See Pro. c. 1. from v. 20. to the end. Mat. 23. 37. Neh. 9. 20, 26. Iſa. 63. 10. Pſal. 81. v. 11, 12, 13.

If thus to believe be a dangerous and pernitious Errour, we confeſs we are Guilty,

Guilty, and not like to be otherwiſe; for we cannot perſwade ourſelves to embrace that Anti-evangelical Opinion, That God from all Eternity hath perſonally and conditionally, without reſpect to their accepting or rejecting the Salvation offer'd in Chriſt, elected ſome and reprobated others by an immutable Decree, ſo that thoſe who are ſo elected ſhall certainly be ſaved, let them do what they will, for God's Decree can't be reverſs'd, let the unſtable Mind of Man vary as it will: and thoſe that are reprobated were in effect damned thouſands of Years before they were born, ſo that their Salvation is put beyond all hope, let them ſeek it never ſo careſtly and diligently, and be never ſo deſirous to ſerve and pleaſe God. For beſides, that this ſad Tidings inſtead of glad Tidings, if it were really true in itſelf, puts an end to the whole buſineſs of Religion, by rendring all Worſhip and Devotion, all Preaching, Praying, Aſſembling together, and Holy Living as 'twere uſeleſs, by invalidating all whatſoever on Man's part, as nothing contributing (as a neceſſary Condition on his part to be performed or neglected) towards his Salvation or eternal Deſtruction.

ſtruction. We dare not take up an Opinion ſo diametrically oppoſite to the very Attributes of God, and his repeated Proteſtations to the contrary, and with ſome Men thus preſume to arraign his Juſtice, Mercy and Goodneſs; we cannot believe that God who is Love itſelf, and Goodneſs itſelf, and hath always manifeſted a wonderful Care and Concern for Man as his darling Creature, it being diſagreeable to his Power, to condemn thoſe that have not deſerved to be puniſhed, and having no pleaſure in the death of him that dies, ſhould yet make the major part of Mankind with deſign to damn them, unprovok'd thereto, without ever tendring them Salvation; or that he would make the far greater number wholly uncapable of accepting the Salvation tendred them, by putting it out of their power to perform thoſe Conditions and Terms upon which he offers it, and then condemn them to eternal Miſery for not complying with thoſe Conditions that 'twas impoſſible for them to obſerve: For he don't only call to all the ends of the Earth (which implies all Mankind) to look to him and be ſaved, but he hath given to every one a Portion of his Spirit

Wiſ. 12. 15, 16.

Ezek. 18. 22.

Wiſ. 11. 23, 24.

Iſai. 45. 22.

Spirit to enable them ſo to do, he hath not only ſent forth the Son of his Love to ſhed his Blood for every Man, to be lifted up as *Moſes* lifted up the Brazen Serpent, that whoſoever believeth in him ſhould not periſh; but he alſo draws them, and as they will receive it, toucheth them with that Divine Magnet that only can incline and impower them effectually to turn to that Pole in which all our true Happineſs centers. Joh. 3. 14, 15, 16. Joh. 6. 44, 45.

But this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkneſs rather than light, becauſe their deeds are evil; and hates the light, and will not bring their deeds to it, leſt it ſhould reprove them; for whatſoever is reprovable is made manifeſt by the light, but men love their own broad ways, to purſue the ſight of their eyes and deſire of their minds, and therefore hate to be control'd therein and reform'd. The Apoſtle ſtirring up the *Epheſians* to Purity of Life, and to avoid ſeveral Evils there mentioned, ſaith expreſly, *Let no man deceive you with vain words, for becauſe of theſe things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of diſobedience.* And in another place, *That thoſe who live after the fleſh ſhall die.* So that Joh. 3. 19, 20. Eph. 5. 13. Eccl. 11. 9. Eph. 5. 6, 7. Rom. 8. 13.

that 'tis for want of Peoples embracing the Means, and bringing their Deeds to the Light of Chriſt in their Hearts, and heeding the Reproofs of Inſtruction, which is the Way of Life, for want of ſowing to the Spirit, and by it mortifying the Deeds of the Fleſh, that People are loſt and ſentenced to Perdition, and not becauſe they were perſonally and inconditionally reprobated from all Eternity. God who is Lord of all, is gracious unto all, and would have all Men to be ſaved; but they diſobey the Call of God, and reject his Offers, and reſiſt the Strivings of his Spirit, and are deaf to thoſe Knocks of our Saviour for Reception and Entertainment in their Hearts, and chuſe and prefer the preſent World, and will not deny themſelves to follow Chriſt. 'Tis not as theſe Men ſay, becauſe Salvation was never within their reach: if 'twere not, what muſt we think? Were thoſe feigned Tears then that our Saviour ſhed over *Jeruſalem*, when the Day of its Viſitation was over? Saying alſo, *How often would I have gathered thee as a hen gathers her chickens, but you would not*; not you could not.

Prov. 6. 23.
Gal. 6. 8.
1 Tim. 2. 3, 4.
Rev. 3. 20.
Luke 16. 41, 42.
Matth. 23. 37.

If

If any Men can be ſo hardy as to entertain an Opinion ſo derogatory to the Juſtice, Mercy, Love, and Paternal Care of God, and repugnant to the Goſpel-meſſage, we cannot but admire what ſhould induce them to obtrude it upon others, and urge it as though 'twas a neceſſary Point to be believed in the Chriſtian Religion; for we cannot apprehend how this begets love to God, increaſeth Faith in Chriſt, and raiſeth our Veneration for him, excites to Diligence, and encourages Piety, which is that which advanceth true Religion; but on the contrary, that it tends to the indulging ſome in a Security, and procure in others a ſlight Eſteem of the Death and Sacrifice of Chriſt, as being partial, and caſts them into Deſpond, and probably may encourage both to gratifie the Deſires of their Minds to the full extent, ſince nothing can alter ſuch a ſuppoſed Decree of God one way or the other: Yet we deny not the Preſcience of God, who fore-knows all things, things paſt, preſent, and to come, being at once preſent to him; ſo that it may be ſaid, ſuch who believe in Chriſt with that living active Faith that works by Love, and excites to Obedi-

ence,

ence, and perſevere therein unto the end, and ſo knows Salvation by him, are in him in whom the Election is before the World began; and that thoſe who ſo believe not, but reject the Tenders of his Love, and by perſiſting in Diſobedience, neglects ſo great Salvation, are condemned already. Nor do we deny ſuch a Preference as that ſome are made Stewards over more, and ſome fewer Talents, according to which their Improvement ought to be: Where much is given much is required, and where leſs is given leſs is required; for God is juſt and equal in all his Ways, he is not a hard Maſter, that he ſhould exact or expect more than the Improvement of his own: Had he that received but one Talent, imploy'd it, and made it two, we doubt not but it had been accepted; for we believe that none are from Eternity abſolutely excluded without any Talent, and that a Day alſo is afforded wherein 'tis poſſible for them to improve it. So that though the Grace may work more powerfully in ſome than in others, yet are all left without Excuſe.

Matth. 25. 14, to the 28.

There is yet another Opinion dependant on this, which we cannot receive neither,

neither, as they ſtate it, for which our Oppoſers think very ill of us; that is, once in a ſtate of Grace and ever ſo; that there is no total or final falling away from Grace. How this Doctrine promotes true Zeal and Piety, and improves Chriſtianity, we can't underſtand, nor ſee no other reaſon why its Votaries ſhould be ſo fond of it, but becauſe 'tis concordant to that of Perſonal Election and Reprobation; ſo that thoſe who imbrace the one, are bound to believe the other: But otherwiſe, certainly it tends rather to ſlacken than ſpur on People to that care and diligence, and conſtant unwearied watchfulneſs to Prayer, which our Lord ſo much exhorted to, and the Apoſtles ſo ſolicitouſly preſſes the Saints every-where to be found in, as of abſolute neceſſity. What elſe means thoſe Promiſes of Reward in the *Revelations*, to thoſe who ſhould overcome and hold out to the end, but to ingage them to a conſtant Perſeverance? Or what needed it, if 'twere impoſſible for them to fall ſhort; who I ſuppoſe none will deny to have been in a ſtate of Grace? And the Church of *Epheſus* was threatned to have their Candleſtick removed, if they repented Rev. 2. 5. 3. 16.

repented not, and did their firſt works; and that of *Laodicea* to be ſpewed out of his Mouth. Who can ſay thoſe fooliſh Virgins in the Parable were not once in a ſtate of Grace, whoſe Lamps were once lighted and burning, as well as trimm'd, or elſe they could not properly be ſaid to be gone out; Or that thoſe were not call'd by Saving Grace, in whoſe hearts the Heavenly Seed ſprung up, and for a time proſper'd, 'till the Bryars and Thorns, the over-care and concern about the things of this Life, choak'd it; 'twas not that they had no day of Viſitation from God, wherein they might have wrought out their Salvation, had they continued to make the Kingdom of Heaven, and its Righteouſneſs, their firſt and chiefeſt Choice, and placed their treaſure there, and diſentangled themſelves from thoſe unneceſſary Cares; the Seed that was ſown and ſprung up, was the very ſame with that which in the honeſt heart brought forth fruit abundantly.

Mat. 25. 8.

Luke c. 8. v. 7, 8, 14, 15.

Surely *Paul* that Great Apoſtle was not of theſe Mens Opinion, when after he had long laboured in the Goſpel, takes care to keep under his Body, leaſt while he Preach'd to others he himſelf ſhould

1 Cor. 9. 27.

ſhould be a Caſt-away, whom yet we doubt not, but they will grant was then effectually called, and in a ſtate of Grace. And the Author to the *Hebrews* writing in the third Chapter, to thoſe he calls holy Brethren, and Partakers of the heavenly Calling, Verſe the 12th, exhorts them to take heed leſt there was in any of them an evil Heart of Unbelief in departing from the Living God. And again, Chap. 4. 1. *Let us therefore fear leſt a promiſe being left us of entring his reſt*, (ſurely then not eternally reprobated) *any of you ſhould ſeem to come ſhort of it.* Verſe 12. *Let us labour therefore to enter that reſt, leſt any man fall after the ſame example of unbelief.* Again *Chap. 6. Verſe* 4, 5, 6. ſpeaking of thoſe who had been enlightned, and had taſted of the heavenly Gift, and were made Partakers of the Holy Ghoſt, and that had taſted the good Word of God, and the Powers of the World to come, (ſhew'd ſigns that they were effectually call'd, and in a State of Grace) that if they ſhould fall away 'twould be impoſſible to renew them again to Repentance; not becauſe they were eternally reprobated, but becauſe they crucified to themſelves the Son of God a-

freſh, becauſe they grieved his good Spi-
Ezek. 18. 24, 26. and c. 33. v. 18. rit, and rejected the Means: Hath not the Lord ſaid, If a righteous man turns from his righteouſneſs, he ſhall die: Who can be righteous without the aſſiſtance of God's Grace? No Man can make himſelf ſo; 'tis not in Man to direct his own Ways; and yet it ſeems 'tis poſſible for him to fall from it, after he hath lived ſo long under its conduct as by it to be made righteous, and one would think ſhould then be ſanctified too. Our Saviour ſaith of him-
John 15. 1, 2, 5, 6. ſelf, *I am the true vine, ye are the branches; my Father is the husband-man, every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away.* Again, *If a man abide not in me, he is caſt forth as a branch and is withered.* Surely thoſe who are Branches in Chriſt, while ſo, are accepted of the Father; and yet it ſeems 'tis poſſible for them to fall away and be cut off as wither'd Branches; whence he often repeats this Condition if ye
John 15. 10. abide in me; and preſently he ſaith the way to continue in his Love was to do his Will, as he had that of his Father's, and continued in his Love. But though we can't embrace their Opinion, for their Reaſons, and as they ſtate it,

it, but that 'tis possible for People to make a considerable Progress in Grace, and yet for want of a careful and constant Watchfulness to that Grace they may fall away: Yet we believe such a State and Growth in Grace throw a vigilant Attention thereto, and such a degree of Faith attainable, as that there is no more going forth.

But that which seems to be our capital Error, and the top of all their Charge, and that which is to silence all Plea's in our behalf, is our omitting the use of the Ordinances (so called) of Baptism and Bread, and Wine. *John* indeed as the next immediate Fore-runner of Christ to prepare his Way, gave an Alarm to the *Jews* that were so secure under the Law of *Moses*, and proclaim'd the Kingdom of Heaven at hand, and the time come wherein, God commanded the *Jews*, as well as others everywhere to repent; 'twas not sufficient for them to go on in sinning, and then offer those respective Sacrifices which the Law enjoyn'd them for the same, but now the Wrath of God was near to be reveal'd from Heaven against all Ungodliness and Unrighteousness of Men: 'twas not sufficient to deck and

Mat. 3. 2. Acts 17. 30.

Rom. 1. 18.

Mat. 23. 25, 26. and c. 3. 10. make clean the outside of the Cup and Platter, but the inside was to be clean'd, and then the outside would be clean also. The Axe was now laid to the root, and every Tree that brought not forth good Fruit was to be hewn down. The Law of *Moses* took hold on exterior Acts and could not make perfect as pertaining to the Conscience, but now that Dispensation was about to be established that comes nearer home, and takes cognizance of the very Thoughts, that Sin be not so much as conceived by the Will's joyning thereto. Wherefore *John* was sent to administer the Baptism of Repentance as a lively Figure of that which was presently after to follow; for *John*'s Baptism was not capable to produce this Effect upon the Mind: and he himself testifies, *That though he baptized them with water, yet he that came after him, that was before him, and more honourable than he, should baptize them with the Holy Ghost, and with fire, that his fan was in his hand, and and that 'twas he should throughly purge his floor.* Which is the great Work that is to be done under his Gospel-dispensation, to take away the Sins of the World, and destroy the Works of the Devil,

Heb. 9. 9. 2 Cor. 10. 5. James 1. 15.

Matt. c. 3. v. 11, 12.

1 John 3. 8.

Devil, to purifie Peoples Hearts, and make them ſpiritually minded; this is the proper Effects of Chriſt's laſting Baptiſm, not the waſhing away of the Filth of the Fleſh, but the anſwer of a good Conſcience towards God, to purge our Conſciences from dead Works, to ſerve the Living God in Newneſs of Life. The Baptiſm of Chriſt is but one, and thoſe who by it are baptized into Jeſus Chriſt, are baptized into his Death, and their old Man crucified with him, that the body of Sin may be deſtroy'd, and they no longer ſerve Sin, becauſe they that are dead with Chriſt are freed from Sin, and made alive to God, to live a holy righteous Life: Theſe are the bleſſed Effects of the Baptiſm of the Holy Ghoſt and Fire, and Benefits that redound to thoſe who are in truth waſhed by Chriſt in that holy Laver which entitles us to a part in him; 'tis our chiefeſt Concern to know this inward ſpiritual Baptiſm of Chriſt, that our Hearts may be waſhed, purified, and ſanctified by the Spirit of God; and that we really put on Chriſt, and are in him who is the Subſtance, in whom the Types ended. *John* knew and foretold himſelf that he muſt de-

1 Pet. 3. 21.

Epheſ. 4. 5.

Rom. 6. 3. and v. 6, 7, 8, 11.

Zech. 13. 1.

1 Cor. 6. 11.

John 3. 30. creaſe, but Chriſt muſt encreaſe; he doth not ſay, I ſhall ceaſe preſently at once, ſo ſoon as Chriſt's Baptiſm takes place; but I muſt decreaſe, but were Water-baptiſm to continue always amongſt Chriſtians, then would not *John* decreaſe: Nor will it ſolve this Allegation, That 'twas aboliſht as *John*'s, and inſtituted anew as Chriſt's, for then hath Chriſt his different Goſpel-baptiſms, which is erronious.

We grant that ſome of the Apoſtles did uſe Water-baptiſm for a time, but we believe 'twas rather in compliance with the Circumſtances of Time than of Neceſſity, and in condeſcention to the Weakneſs of Believers in the very Infancy of the Church, and even the ſame Age wherein *John* baptized, who was not only a true Meſſenger of God in his time, but had gained great Credit among the People, and his Memory and Meſſage could not ſoon be forgotten; nor was it eaſie to draw them from a Practice that but juſt before was acknowledged to be of Divine Authority: for we find the Apoſtles tolerated the believing *Jews* to live in certain Rites and Ceremonies of the *Moſaical* Law, notwithſtanding the *Meſſiah* was come

come in the Fleſh and abrogated them; ſo difficult 'tis to diſengage People from thoſe things wherein they have been educated, and to which their Minds are once glewed, and ſome of them would have had the believing Gentiles come under that Yoak and be circumciſed, which *Paul* their great Apoſtle withſtood, ſeeing beyond all thoſe things, knowing that the Kingdom of God was not Meats and Drinks, but Righteouſneſs, Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghoſt, and not in Word but Power, not divers Waſhings and carnal Ordinances which were Shadows and to perriſh, but the Body is of Chriſt, and thoſe that are in him, are in him compleat, believing that if they were circumciſed, Chriſt ſhould profit them nothing; and yet we ſee ſuch was his Condeſcention, that he himſelf notwithſtanding circumciſed *Timothy*, and when he was at *Jeruſalem* ſhaved his head, *&c.* behaving himſelf as a *Jew*, for the ſakes of thoſe who ſaw not ſo far as himſelf. And notwithſtanding he was ſuch a labourious and zealous Publiſher of the Goſpel, yet we find he baptized but very few, and thanks God that he baptized no more, (ſurely

Rom. 14. 17. 1 Cor. 4. 20. Coloſ. 2. v. 14 & 16, 17, 22, 10. Heb. 9. 9, 10. Gal. 5. 2. Acts c. 21. v. 20, to the 28. 1 Cor. 1. 14.

'twas not then eſſential to the Goſpel) but faith plainly, That he was not ſent to baptize, but to preach the Goſpel, to turn People from Darkneſs to Light, from the Power of Satan to God, who had delivered them from the Power of Darkneſs, and tranſlated them into the Kingdom of his dear Son; 'tis this that is of abſolute Neceſſity to our Salvation: he did not then baptize becauſe ſome others did it, which yet is as large a Commiſſion as perhaps any pretend to now-a-days Of which we ſay as he did of Circumciſion (though we do not grant 'tis the Seal of the Covenant, and introduced in room of Circumciſion as ſome will have it, but without Scripture-authority) Baptiſm or no Baptiſm availeth any thing ſhort of a new Creature, which is the trueſt Sign of poſſeſſing the inward ſpiritual Grace, and of being in Chriſt, and is beyond all viſible Signs whatſoever: The Apoſtles having thus indulged it, 'tis no wonder that 'twas continued, and ſince got footing under the Degeneracy, for as Corruption entred the Church, and was encreaſed, the Spirit and Life of Chriſtianity was more and more eclipſed, and the minds of its

1 Cor. 1. 17.
Coloſ. 1. 13.

Pro-

Profeſſors grew darker, and then adhered more to external Performances; and not only continued that which had been uſed by their Predeceſſors, or at leaſt ſomething in its ſtead, but by degrees added more Rites and Ceremonies; and at length began to trim and deck that Religion that in itſelf was plain, ſimple, and homely, and conſiſted more in Power and Divine Love than outward Obſervations; which in proceſs of time was ſo dreſt and garniſht, that its Auguſt Splendour became inviting to others. Under this Degeneracy in degree ſprung up Infant-Baptiſm, a meer Humane Invention, without any Scripture-authority either by Precept or Practice; wherefore for thoſe who do not uſe Baptiſm, as 'twas inſtituted under its proper Diſpenſation to upbraid us for neglecting it is abſurd and unreaſonable.

But that which makes the loudeſt Out-cry of all, is our Diſuſe of the Sacrament, ſo called of Bread and Wine, 'tis this is that peſtilent mortal Error that in our Oppoſer's Account, renders us worſe then the Papiſts, whatever 'tis that makes us the Spawn of the Jeſuites, which with ſeveral others are Epithets,

thets, that to be sure were calculated tho' unjustly to render us as odious as may be to the People, and carry a great deal of Rancour in them, and savours of too much Gall, to proceed from the meek Spirit of Christianity, that teacheth to be at Peace with, and have Charity for all that call on the Lord out of a pure heart: But whether upon the whole Matter we deserve this severe bitter Censure, or whether those that so liberally bestows it upon us, have a just right to cast the first Stone, is what we desire our sober Neighbours to consider, and not judge us also by whole-sale, from an implicit Belief of what others say of us. We are not ignorant of the great Noise and Stir there hath been about this in *Christendom*, to the scandalizing Christianity among both *Jews* and *Turks*: the Papists have improv'd it to downright Idolatry, affirming 'tis the real Body and Blood, and as such adores it, (one would think 'twere better let alone) others, that Christ is in it, though they know not how: one saith 'tis this, another 'tis that; while they all seem to expect that from it which it doth not necessarily administer; for want of distinguish-

2 Tim. 2. 22.

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ing between that Bread of Life that John 6. came down from Heaven, that Fleſh 51, 56. and Blood of Chriſt, which giveth Life to all that feed thereon, by which they dwell in him and he in them, and that Supper which was eaten by the Primitive Chriſtians in Commemoration of his Death and Sacrifice; which are not ſo connext, as that the one neceſſarily includes the other, as Experience abundantly teſtifies, would People but be true to themſelves herein; how many are there that receive this from Year to Year, who yet complain all their lives of Deadneſs, Dryneſs, and Leanneſs of Soul, and want of Power, not receiving that renewing of Life and ſpiritual Strength that is propoſed in it, and ſo but an empty Shadow indeed: for how can they in truth expect to feed on Chriſt ſpiritually in their Hearts who will John 14. not admit that he really dwells in his 20, 21, Saints, but eſteem it an Error in thoſe 23. that do; however, we believe all People ought to be well perſwaded in their own Minds, and ſeriouſly conſiderate in theſe and other religious Practiſes, and not take up things meerly tradititionally becauſe others do it; nor ought they to be vehemently preſt

to

to or againſt t ings not abſolutely eſſential to Salvation, in which their Underſtandings are not clear: nor ſhould any be ſcoft or reproacht for thoſe things which to them are Matter of Conſcience, and therefore Sacred, though to others it may appear of leſs moment; a Practice that is a great Shame among People profeſſing Chriſtianity. Nor do we judge and condemn thoſe that are found in the Practice either of this or Water-baptiſm as 'twas primitively uſed, whoſe ſober, Chriſtian, circumſpect Lives witneſſeth to their ſincere Intentions herein, who may be conſcientiouſly tender in it, and fearful to omit it, till they are otherwiſe fully perſwaded: But for us, to whom the barrenneſs and emptineſs of theſe outward viſible Things are manifeſt, we cannot continue therein, yielding no true Soul-ſatisfaction, nor adminiſtring any inward ſpiritual Grace to us. Wherefore having taſted that the Lord is good and gracious, we wait for the ſincere Milk of that Word by which we have been begotten to God, that we may receive ſtrength thereby, and grow in Grace, and the Knowledge of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and a greater

1 Pet. 2. 2, 3.

2 Pet. 3. 18.

Acquaintance with that true inward Spiritual Communion and Fellowſhip with him, wherein he ſups with his Saints, and they with him; and receives Life by him, who dwells in them, and they in him; as the Members are joyned to the Head, and partakes of its Life, and liveth by it; or the Branches to the Vine, which receives Life, Vertue and Nouriſhment from him, whereby Fruit is brought forth to the glory of God, and well-pleaſing to him. 'Tis not ſufficient that we participate hereof once a Month or Quarter, but as the *Jews* had their Manna, freſh every Morning, ſo ought we to receive a daily ſupply, and renewing of ſtrength in our inward Man, by eating that Heavenly Bread, that nouriſheth up to Eternal Life, and drinking plentifully of that Well of Living-Water, which in the Saints ſprings up to Life Eternal; for as in God we live, move, and have our very being; ſo is Chriſt the true and proper Life of the inward Man by which it truly lives to God, nor can it live but by him. Thoſe that are begotten to God by the Word of Life, and are born again of the Spirit, are priviledged thus to feed on Chriſt,

Rev. 3.20.

Eph. 5.30.

Joh. 15.5.

Exod. 16. 21.

Joh. 4.14.

Christ, and enjoy him, which none can do that are not first quickened and made alive by him; none can receive Life, Sap and Vertue from him as Head and Vine, that are not first joyned to him as Members and Branches of him; nor is it sufficient to make People Members of Christ, and give them admittance to feed on him, in that they were sprinkled when Infants, &c. as we have already expres'd, though they should eat Bread and drink Wine all their days.

Since then we no less enjoy the Substance without the Sign, why may we not omit it, as either being but temporary, or not of absolute necessity, as well as our Opposers do that which was instituted (to use their own term) at the same time, and with as great solemnity, and greater formality, and was no less positively commanded under the same pretence? Why may not the same Authority absolve us from the use of this, and excuse us from being chargeable with the breach of a Command of Christ, as release them from
Joh. 13. 4, 5, 8, 14, 15. washing one anothers Feet, and secure them from the like censure? As also that of the Apostles, cencerning things strangled

ſtrangled and Blood, and that of *James* anointing the Sick with Oil? Why ſhould they be thus partial? Have we not good reaſon to conclude, that if theſe had not been long ſince laid down, they would have cleav'd as cloſe to them; and that had thoſe of Baptiſm, and Bread and Wine been then diſcontinued alſo, they would be now as eaſie under its omiſſion? For Tradition, Cuſtom, and Education, makes greater impreſſions on Mens minds than perhaps every one may be ſenſible of; nor is it an eaſie task at firſt to move them from thoſe things to which they have been faſtned by it. Would but People wholly relinquiſh theſe Prejudices, and conſider it impartially, 'tis probable there may appear no ſuch real difference, as juſtly to omit the one, and yet with equal reaſon to continue the other; ſince 'tis not that Bread that gives life to the Soul, nor doth neceſſarily include it, but that Chriſt may be, and is received, and fed on without it. Nor that thoſe can be thought to forget his Death and Sacrifice who ſenſibly partake of the Benefits thereof, and purſue its Ends; who are taught and aſſiſted by him to live a godly

Acts 15. 20, 29. Jam. 5. 14, 15.

Tit. 2, 14.

Gal. 1. 4.

ly righteous Life, and bears about in them the Marks of the Dying of our
Mat. 1.21. Lord Jeſus; who died for all, that thoſe
2 Cor. 5. 15. who live ſhould no longer live to themſelves, fulfilling the deſires of their minds, but to him that died for them;
Phil. 3. 10. that through the power of his Reſurrection they may mortifie the Deeds of the Fleſh, and have Fellowſhip with his Sufferings, in whom his Life is made manifeſt; neither can thoſe who acknowledge his Death and Sacrifice, and partake from time to time of this Bread and Wine in memory of it, and yet are not by him redeemed from a vain Converſation, and made conformable to his Death, and ſo feed on him as to participate of that Life that comes by him, in anywiſe eſcape Damnation, let their Pretenſions be what they will.

Since then God hath repleniſht our Hearts with his Grace, and hath not with-held his heavenly Manna from us, but daily owns us by his comfortable Preſence, to our great ſatisfaction, under the Omiſſion of theſe things, ſupplying our Wants and Neceſſities as we have recourſe unto him, in that which ever hath acceſs unto him, having our continual

tinual Dependancy on him, who enables and ſtrengthens thoſe of us * that retain our Primitive Sincerity and Integrity, to lead a Sober, Pious, Chriſtian Life, as becomes the Goſpel of Chriſt, which is the certain Product of Spiritual Grace; and foraſmuch as our Oppoſers acknowledge it to be but an outward viſible Sign, and dare not ſay that the inward Spiritual Grace is tied to it, nor that 'tis of abſolute neceſſity to Salvation; with what Reaſon do they Unchriſtian us, and ſo load us with Calumnies and Accuſations on this Account, uſing it as an Inſtance to blacken us, and condemn in groſs our whole Chriſtian Profeſſion, principally from hence, as though 'twere the chief thing that conſtitutes a Chriſtian, and entitles him to the Benefits that come by Chriſt.

* For we intend not to Apologize for thoſe who tho' they may be call'd by our Name, yet live looſly and walk diſorderly, and are Blemiſhes and a Grief to us; which yet ought to be imputed to their Inſincerity or Unwatchfulneſs, and not to the In-ſufficiency of the Prin-ci-ple they pretend to.

What ſhall we think then of perhaps more than two parts in three of their own Aſſembly, who no more practice this than do we, and yet are many of them as ſober People, and if we may

know (as Christ directs us) by their Fruits, are doubtless as near the Kingdom, and no less in a State of Grace, than are those who so exult in, and value themselves upon this Performance; which however it may bound and distinguish particular Societies and Communions, 'tis certain no Observations nor Performances short of being ruled and governed by the Spirit of Christ, as Head, can entitle us to a Membership in him; we may make a specious Shew, and carry a System of Divinity in our Heads, but if he rules not our Hearts we are none of his. 'Twere well they were as thoughtful to fulfil all Righteousness in every respect, and as zealously careful and concern'd to observe and punctually perform all the Commands and Injunctions to which the Christian Religion obligeth them, and to qualify themselves to be rightful Inheritors of those Blessings and Promises pronounced by our Saviour, as they tenaciously adhere to this, as tho' 'twere indeed the Sum both of Mens Duty and Enjoyments, and that their Salvation turned upon this very Pin; which yet People may perform while their Wills are unsubdued, and Lusts unmor-

unmortified. But we find that Men have been apt enough to be buſily employed about Mint, Annis, and Cummin, whilſt they neglect the weightier Matters, to run into, and cry up, and maintain thoſe exteriour parts of Religion, that are reconcilable to an Unconverted State.

If the Profeſſors of Chriſtianity were leſs taken up about Signs and Shadows, and nice and unneceſſary Scrutinies and Diſtinctions wherewith they perplex it, and more devoted to obſerve the weighty, important, and indiſpenſable Precepts of Chriſt, and demonſtrate the Power that Chriſtianity hath over their Minds, by affording ſignal Inſtances of their being his true Diſciples, and righful Heirs of his Kingdom, being in meaſure inveſted with his Divine Vertues and Graces, we ſhould have leſs Envy, Variance, Back-biting, and Detraction, which weakens the common Intereſt of Piety, and gives our common Enemy an advantage over us; and more Chriſtian Love, Peace, Concord and good Neighbourhood amongſt us. If all that means well did but purſue Vertue, love it, and encourage it where-ever it appears, and hate Vice

and Evil in all, and discountenance it every where, and make these the Measure of their Christian Charity, rather than Parallel Opinions in lesser Matters, 'twould bring us nearer together, and more advance True Piety, than all their contending about different Apprehensions in things far less essential. God, who regards not Names, but Natures, knows among all Nations and People who are his; and the Rule he left us to know also was their Fruits, their Actions being the exertion of their Wills; all Mankind are either under the Power and Conduct of the Spirit of God, or else of the Devil; all are either Carnal or Spiritual-minded, and as is the spring and bent of their Desires and Affections, so is their Actions; each Birth have their proper Products, which are contrary to each other. So that let what Notions or Opinions soever possess Mens Heads, they live according to that Spirit and Principle that governs their Hearts. We cannot gather Grapes of Thorns, nor Figs of Thistles; no Fountain sends forth bitter Water and sweet at the same time. 'Tis an Evangelical Truth, Those that live in Envy and Strife, and bring forth the Fruits

Gal. 5. 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24.

of

of the Fleſh, are of their Father the Devil; and thoſe who by the Spirit mortifies thoſe corrupt Luſts and Affections, and bring forth the Fruits of of the Spirit, adorning the Doctrin of God our Saviour, by a ſober, godly, righteous Life, are of God; for herein the Children of God are manifeſt from the Children of the Devil. Eph. 5. 9. 1 John 3. 10.

Thus have we candidly, though briefly, expreſt our real Opinion and Belief in thoſe Points in which we apprehend our Adverſaries have endeavour'd moſt to expoſe us, which we hope may prove ſatisfactory to thoſe who are not reſolved to think ill of us: but to ſpeak fully to every critical, trifling Objection, were a tedious Task, as well as vaſtly beyond the Extent of our Deſign. We requeſt our ſerious Neighbours to hear and ſee for themſelves, and not take things upon truſt from others, and to judge the things they know not, but condemn us by hearſay; don't be impoſed upon by thoſe whoſe peeviſh humours would have all do like themſelves, who either look not at all, or but very coyly into the Books of thoſe they have taken a Pet againſt,

whoſe Perſwaſion in ſome things differs from what they have pronounced Orthodox, as tho' Truth were their peculiar incloſure, which yet certainly argues either a great deal of Prejudice, or a feeble and fleeting Judgment, that dares not truſt it ſelf: Were our Books ſtuft with ſuch palpable Errors as is ſuggeſted, ſurely 'twere not ſo dangerous reading them: Who fears to read the Alcharon? But on the contrary, 'tis a ſtrong indication that they contain much truth; for as 'tis the proper Object of the Underſtanding, ſo where it appears with a clear Evidence, anſwering to Peoples own Experience, 'tis very forcible and prevalent upon the Minds of thoſe who diligently ſeek it for love of it, and willingly depoſit all preingagements of Mind in its diſquiſition. Be then ſo juſt to us, and kind to your ſelves, as to relinquiſh all Prejudice and Prepoſſeſſions, and impartially examine the truth of theſe things; ſearch the Sacred Scriptures diligently, with an inclination rather to find and embrace Truth, than to ſupport a received Opinion; try whether 'tis ſo or not, comparing it with your own Experiences and the Witneſs of God in

your

your own Hearts. Though our Belief in ſome of theſe Particulars don't exactly quadrate to that of our Oppoſers, it don't therefore neceſſarily follow, 'tis not agreeable to Truth and Scripture; nor can they give us any infallible aſſurance, that their Conceptions are a true Standard of Truth, notwithſtanding they vend their Apprehenſions as the only Orthodox, yes, and are diſpleaſed too with thoſe that can't be determined by them.

We have no Deſign carrying on behind the Curtain, howſoever our Sober Demeanour may be uncharitably (not to ſay maliciouſly) inſinuated, as only a Cover of Sheeps Cloathing upon the Wolves Nature; and our moſt Solemn Declaration of our Belief in ſeveral Religious Points (being undeniable Truths) conſtrued, and ſuggeſted by ſome Men as only a fair Cover wherewith we guild over our Poyſon, that it may paſs the leſs ſuſpected, and be the more glibly ſwallowed. What think you, is not this the heighth of Prejudice and Envy in the abſtract? Would they themſelves be content to be thus interpreted? We have no intent to decoy and trapan People, that we ſhould

walk under a diſguiſe, which Intreagues uſually have intereſt at one end of them, which can't be our caſe. who neither give nor take Money for Preaching; ſo that the increaſe of our Numbers will not fill our Coffers. We have no other Intereſt to promote, but the Advancement of True Piety and Chriſtianity: and having Love and Good-will to all People, more eſpecially to thoſe whoſe Minds are awakened, and Hearts warmed, having true fervent Deſires, and living Breathings towards God, thirſting after a nearer and more ſatisfactory knowledge of, and acquaintance with him, than barely a profeſſion and hear-ſay of him, and therefore what we have found advantageous, aſſiſtant and ſatisfactory to us, in our unwearied purſuit after Peace with him, that we recommend to others. We call People home to the Gift of God in themſelves, which only can do them good, that every one may know the good Shepheard and Biſhop of Souls for themſelves, and hear and know his Voice in them, from that of a ſtranger, and learn of him and follow him, who is pure, and ever leads to Purity and Holineſs, that ſo his offering up of himſelf

ſelf for them, may be of benefit to them, and they experience the great Salvation of God; for impreſs this upon your Minds, and take it along with you, That notwithſtanding our Saviour hath paid a Ranſom for us, and made an Attonement through the precious Blood of his Croſs; yet if we experience not the end of his Coming, and Death effected, and anſwered in our ſelves, it ſhall avail us nothing; except we know him a Saviour and Supporter near; except we know a Principle of Divine Light and Life, to illuminate our Minds, to revive and warm our languiſhing Hearts, to beget and increaſe true Love to God, and the living Faith, that gives victory to convert us, and govern our Thoughts, to renew and regulate our Wills, and limit our Deſires, and bridle our Tongues, to excite holy Inclinations, and keep up a due Heat in our Chriſtianity, and ſtrengthens our Minds in that which is good and well-pleaſing to God: Except we know theſe things in and for our ſelves, all our outſide ſhew of Religion is but vain, and our profeſſion of Chriſt ſhall profit us nothing, but we

we ſhall lye down in ſorrow at laſt;
Rom. 8. 9, 14. for none are Chriſt's, but thoſe that have his Spirit, and are influenced by it; nor are any Children of God, but thoſe that are led by the Spirit of God; which begets in the Mind a deteſtation of Sin and Evil, and a love to Purity, Goodneſs and Vertue; wherefore, laying aſide all Strife and Animoſities, all Envying and Evil-ſpeaking, let us abhor that which is Evil, and cleave to
Rom. 12. 9. that which is Good, and addreſs our ſelves with a due and humble Application to the accompliſhment of that moſt concerning and important Affair of our Lives, the working out our Salvation. And let every one follow the Lord faithfully, according to what is made known to them, knowing that we ſhall be judged according to our Knowledge, and that 'twill be happy for thoſe whoſe Wills and Performances correſpond with their Underſtandings, in that Day when all muſt ſtand before the Judgment-ſeat of Chriſt, and give an Account of their Deeds done in the Body, and receive a Sentence thereafter, either, *Come ye bleſſed*, or, *Depart from me ye workers of iniquity*. It won't be then

then of what Congregation or Confeſſion of Faith, or of what Perſwaſion amongſt the many waſt thou: among all which there will then be but two ſorts, the Sheep and the Goats; thoſe that heard the Shepheard's Voice and followed him, who were guided and governed by the good Spirit of God in their Hearts; and thoſe who wrapping their Talent in a Napkin, ſtifled Convictions, and neglecting the Day of their Viſitation, continued under the dark Power of the Evil One. One may go a great way, and make a fair ſhew of Religion and Piety, and yet be turned to the left hand; 'tis not having our Heads filled with curious ſublime Notions, though of never ſo fine and elevated a Speculation; let's trim and garniſh our Lamps never ſo finely, 'twill not adminiſter an entrance without the Heavenly Oil, without that Holy Divine Unction fills our Hearts, enlightens our Minds, and inflames our Affections to a due Watchfulneſs and Obedience to its Teachings, which are the moſt aſſured Marks of our being really in Chriſt, in whom only our acceptance is.

That

That you with us, and we with you, may ſo circumſpectly live up to Light that and Knowledge given by Chriſt, as that our Conſciences may not condemn us; but that, having finiſhed our Days here with comfort, we may lay down our Heads in Peace, with a well-grounded Hope of a Joyful Reſurrection, and have Boldneſs in the Day of Judgment, is our Hearty Deſire.

If what we have Written for your Information, may find ſome place with thoſe, who, being impartial, and inquiring, have room to receive it, and that it Contributes to their Benefit and Satisfaction, we have our End: But for thoſe who are full, or are critical, and ready to Carpe at every Word or Sentence that is not plac'd to their Mind, if not alſo pre-judge it, as 'tis not intended for them; ſo we don't ſuppoſe 'twill Prove to their good Liking, nor meet with a Reception amongſt them. For we don't propoſe to reconcile our whole Belief and Perſwaſion in Religious Matters to that of our Oppoſers, who notwithſtanding, what we have writ, we expect will yet accuſe

accuſe us of Error. However, having thus farr declar'd ourſelves in the moſt neceſſary Points of the Chriſtian Religion, we don't think ourſelves farther obliged to anſwer the Cavils and Criticiſms of ſuch who may appear contentious, and will never want ſomething to object againſt thoſe that comes not up in all things exactly to their Level: whom yet we adviſe, rather to be quiet, and ſtudy to know and govern themſelves, according to that Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, and leads to viſit and aſſiſt the Fatherleſs, and Widows in their Affliction, and to keep themſelves from the Spots and Defilements of this World. Were this (as it ought) our Principal Care and Concern in our Conduct, we ſhould have little mind or leiſure to differ about Matters of leſs moment: and while we ſeem zealouſly to contend about Religion fruſtrate its end. We ſhould not be taken up in diſputing what that Principle is which God hath plac'd in us to do us good, and in mean time neglect its aſſiſtance, and obſtruct its Operation upon the Mind, but be given up to be leaveJam. 1. 27.

ned

ned and changed by it, that we m
1 Cor. 3. 11, 12, 13, 14. partake of the Bleſſings thereof; a with it build on the Foundation whi God hath laid, that which may abi the fiery Tryal. To which we reco mend you, and remains your peaceal and loving Neighbours,

W. C. A. P. J. H, &c.

THE END.